

Sanitized - Approved For Release - CIA

Unaware of CIA Subsidy

Other Report Says
Top Levels Knew
It in Early 60s

By Richard Harwood
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Johnson, was reported on responsible authority last night, was "totally unaware" of the Central Intelligence Agency's financial involvement with the National Student Association.

This official said he further believes that no member of the President's staff was aware of the facts in the case until "very recently."

This disclaimer of White House involvement in the controversial link between the CIA and the college student organization was at odds with other reports.

Vice President Humphrey, for example, was reliably reported to have been informed by NSA officials as early as July, 1966, that they were dependent on the CIA for a large portion of their budget. They asked Humphrey's help in obtaining funds from private organizations.

Known at Top Level.

Moreover, one of the highest officials in both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations stated yesterday that the White House and the State Department had known for years that the CIA was subsidizing student organizations in this country.

He was not certain, he said, whether either President Kennedy or President Johnson was personally informed of the subsidies.

But the decision to put millions of dollars into the covert subsidy operation was made "at the highest levels of the government," he said, and not by the CIA alone. He implied that the idea may have been born in the State Department and that the CIA was asked to carry it out simply because it had the funds and the ability to operate clandestinely.

Unfair to 'Take Rap'

In any event, this former official declared, it is unfair for the CIA to "take the rap" now. He said the agency was doing what it was authorized to do by persons with the authority to speak for the President himself.

Under President Kennedy, he said, the CIA's operations were carefully supervised by an interdepartmental committee that included State Department representatives and Presidential Assistant McGeorge Bundy. Since Bundy's departure, he said, the chief responsibility for CIA liaison in the White House has rested with Walt W. Rostow and his staff.

In reply, a present official of the Administration said the interdepartmental committee would not necessarily review in detail each year a long-standing program such as the CIA subsidy to NSA. The subsidy was begun 13 years ago and there is no reason to assume, the Administration's spokesman said, that the present White House staff—including Rostow—had any specific knowledge of it. He said he could say categorically that Mr. Johnson knew nothing about it.

The former official who revealed the White House involvement in the NSA affair, said he was personally aware in the early 1960s that students were receiving Government subsidies to enable them to attend international student gatherings.

"The object," he said, "was not to subvert students but to make it possible for the American student point of view to be presented. I recall that about 80 went to (a conference at) Helsinki. Many of them were very left wing and were very critical of some aspects of American policy. But they handled themselves very well."

It would have been difficult, if not impossible, he said, to secure Government funds to subsidize openly student trips of this sort. Therefore, he said, the CIA was used. It had plenty of money that could be spent without any public accounting.

"Looking back on it," he said, "I can see that it might have been harmful. But to put all the blame on the CIA is not fair. The CIA was asked to carry it out and to leave the impression that the White House and

other agencies involved in foreign affairs didn't know what was going on is wrong and unfair."

Efforts to reach Bundy and Rostow failed. The State Department had no comment. Nor did the White House press office.

Indeed, the only public statement from the White House has been the announcement made through Under Secretary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach that a panel has been appointed to make policies to guide Federal agencies "in their relationships to the international activities of American educational groups."

It was the international operations of NSA, the oldest and largest college student organization in the United States, that received CIA support. It may have totaled as much as \$3 million since the 1950s.

On Capitol Hill yesterday, there were mixed reactions to the CIA-NSA affair.

Majority Leader Mike Mansfield denounced the agency's involvement in student affairs as a "move toward big brotherism." He denied reports from the CIA that the agency's "watchdogs" in the Senate had been kept informed of the NSA affair. "To the best of my knowledge," he said, "no one was aware of this."

Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.), chairman of the "watchdog" group, declined to comment.

But another Senator, Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.), said a new committee should be created to look into all possible phases of CIA involvement in domestic activities—university research, publications, refugee groups and labor unions as well as student organizations.

His reference to labor unions took on significance as a result of a statement yesterday by Victor Reuther, international relations director for the United Auto Workers.

Reuther was quoted in the New York Post as saying that the CIA's involvement in AFL-CIO affairs is "a lot bigger story" than the story of its involvement in student affairs. As for NSA, its 10-member supervisory board announced yesterday that it "is currently considering the extent of NSA's relations with the CIA, ways to insure that all ties are eliminated, and internal reforms to insure that it will not happen again."

A defense of the CIA subsidies to NSA was given yesterday by Sen. Gale McGee (D-Wyo.). "We are striving," he said, "to survive in a jungle world in which no holds are barred on the part of those with whom we must contend." The CIA, he said, should not be subjected now to "short-sighted criticism."

A leading House Republican, Melvin Laird of Wisconsin, also defended the agency and said the subsidies to NSA were "necessary for American students to be represented at these international conferences."

World Student Unit Admits Foundation Aid

Special to The Washington Post

BRUSSELS, Feb. 16—Jyoti Shankar Singh, secretary general of the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), admitted today that the international youth organization had received aid from the Federation for Youth and Student Affairs, the American Foundation which allegedly served as a channel for CIA funds to WAY. Singh, who is attending a meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, made known his position through a spokesman at WAY headquarters here.

At the same time, Singh emphasized that WAY had not been aware it was receiving any CIA funds. He said that WAY had only received funds from this and other foundations in response to specific requests by an international committee of WAY.

WAY, founded in 1948, has consultative status with several United Nations agencies including the FAO, International Labor Organization (ILO) and Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO). It has been working on a program of expanding contacts between students in Eastern and Western Europe.

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